

Coleg Cambria a Cross-Border College

Institution Information

- Coleg Cambria
- In North East Wales
- One of the UK's largest colleges, with over 7000 full-time and 20,000 part-time students
- <https://www.cambria.ac.uk>



Practices Identified

- 25% of staff come from England with a strong engagement with industries across the border
- Investment in technology to develop staff digital skills and connectivity between different areas of work
- Offer multiple routes to students (vocational or academic) for the same career aspiration



Practice Description

Physically as well as operationally large, the college is composed of seven sites located across the Cheshire/ North Wales border, drawing students from within North Wales, Shropshire, Wirral, Merseyside and Cheshire. As such, it is in some ways a uniquely cross-border college, with 25% of staff coming across from England and strong engagement with industries across the border. Despite navigating the trickiness of sitting across two separate countries, the college identifies as Welsh. The college has an extremely strong sense of community; what staff describe as “the Cambria approach”. As one member of staff put it: *“I wouldn’t know which staff now started off in which institution, we’re all one college.”* This is partly fostered through technology (the campus is Google-enabled), and partly through the large investment in CPD—investing millions of pounds into CPD programmes and equipment and staff are actively encouraged to keep developing their skills and see the connectivity between their different areas of work.

A particular strength to the college is its ability to offer multiple routes to students (vocational or academic) for the same career aspiration; this is further enabled by a ‘right choice review’ check at the end of the first week of the course, allowing students to not only change career but also the type of course, if they find it is not working for them with further review throughout the year. The college’s provision for more unconventional learners is also particularly strong, with a roll-on-roll-off Welsh-government funded traineeship offered to students who are NEET, involving bespoke programmes created with local industries who have a skills shortage, whereby the college delivers the programme necessary and the industry gets to ‘try out’ the students.